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Ministry of Forests and Range

PUBLIC CAN PREVENT FOREST FIRES

VICTORIA – British Columbians are encouraged to be careful with cigarettes, campfires and other open burning, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman said today.

"Every year, human-caused fires threaten public safety, destroy wildlife habitat and often contribute to poor air quality," said Coleman. "We encourage people to go out and enjoy themselves, but please be careful when you are around fires."

Since April, fire crews have responded to 147 fires, 146 of which were caused by people. Many of these were backyard or open burns that were allowed to escape, many of them in developed areas close to human habitation.

Although the forecast is calling for cool weather during the long weekend, the seasonal drying trend has begun, and forest and grass fires will be ignited more easily by escaped campfires, cigarettes, open fires or industrial activities.

Escaped campfires continue to be a main cause of human-caused wildfires. Campfires should never be left unattended. To extinguish the campfire, saturate it with water and ensure the ashes are completely cold to the touch.

Individuals considering conducting a backyard or other open burn are advised to check first with their local fire department or local authorities to find out what bylaws apply in their area, and if there are any restrictions in effect.

For the latest information on fire bans, fire danger ratings and weather information visit the Protection program website: www.for.gov.bc.ca/protect/. Please report all grass and forest fires to 1-800-663-5555, or *5555 on the cellular network.

For audio clips, please visit: www.mediaroom.gov.bc.ca//DisplayEventDetails.aspx?eventId=370

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